THE Chriſtian Hiſtory;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival of Religion in *Great Britain*, *America*, &c.

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Account of the Revival of Religion at LYME *Weſt Pariſh in* Connecticut, *continued.*

MANY with the greateſt Freedom confeſs'd that tho' they had a Name to live they were dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins: and this not only in private; but to Numbers at once. They did not think it Matter of Offence if their Neighbours believ'd them when they ſaid it: they ſpake *ſenſibly* of it, as we might expect a condemn'd Malefactor would do if he was going to the Place of Execution. They would ſolemnly declare that they never knew what real Union to CHRIST was; that they were Strangers to ſenſible Communion with the Father and his Son JESUS, and to the Temper of the Goſpel; and had reſted eaſy with meerly *external* Communion, or the Form of Godlineſs. Their diſtreſs'd Countenances and free and frequent Confeſſions that they were yet in the Bonds of Iniquity together with their Warnings to others, *never* to reſt until they *knew* CHRIST was formed in them, prov'd awakning to many Profeſſors, and put them upon the Search, and Inquiry into the Reaſons of their Hope; and ſome were ſhaken off from their old Foundation, ſuppoſing they had built upon the Sand, whilſt others had the more Peace in believing.

The like Effects, ſometimes more, and ſometimes leſs obſervable, continu'd thro' the Summer. There were alſo many Inſtances, (and the Number was daily increaſing) of Perſons fill'd with great Joy and Comfort. 'Twas common to hear of, and to ſee them overcome, and fainting under high Diſcoveries of God reconciled in CHRIST. Some alſo I have ſeen overcome with Concern for others; and ſome-

times their Concern terminated on particular Perſons that they fear'd were in a State of Sin.

The Converſation of the People in general, was religious. If at any Time Neighbours met, the great Affairs of Salvation were the Subject of Diſcourſe. In the Streets, in the Fields and in private Houſes the Diſcourſe was inſtructive: ſome enquiring the Way to Life, others in their *proper Sphere*, endeavouring to help the Diſtreſſed by their humble Advice and Counſel: ſome that knew the Terrors of the Lord, would *perſuade* the careleſs, and modeſtly recommend the Grace of GOD to their Acceptance, from their own Experience of its Sweetneſs. -- And as there were frequent Enquiries about the Things of infinite Concern, ſo there was a great Increaſe of Knowledge in religious Matters. According to the beſt Obſervation I could make, I believe, the People advanc'd more in their Acquaintance with the Scriptures, and a true doctrinal Underſtanding of the Operations of the holy Spirit in Conviction, Regeneration, and Sanctification, in ſix Months Time, than they had done in the whole of my Miniſtry before, which was *nine Years*.----Nor was this all, but many evidently look'd upon Sin with Abhorrence: they appeared to be *renew'd* in the Spirit of their Minds: *Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking* ſeem'd to be *put away from them, with all Malice*: Their Fruit was unto Holineſs: Love to God and Man, with their genuine Fruits were increaſing. Rough and haughty Minds, became peaceful, gentle and eaſy to be intreated. Lowlineſs, Long-ſuffering, Forbearance, a courteous Deportment, Beneficence, and Tender-heartedneſs, Meekneſs and Moderation, to all Appearance, ſeem'd to increaſe abundantly. And to all theſe, we obſerv'd a Delight in Chriſtian Fellowſhip, in breaking of Bread and in Prayer. I think it can't be expected that Men, in their general Courſe, ſhould give clearer Evidences of a Chriſtian Temper formed in them, than many did in that Seaſon: their Faith work'd by Love, and diſcover'd itſelf in Acts of Piety towards God, Charity and Righteouſneſs towards Men, and Sobriety towards themſelves.

We had ſome ſpecial Seaſons of divine Influence in that Time, both upon converted and unconverted, which I muſt not now relate: it would make the Account too long; but I can't paſs over our *Penticoſt*, on the 11th Day of the following *October*. I preach'd from *Pſal.* 2. 12. upon the Nature

ture and Neceſſity of Faith in CHRIST; and then adminiſtred the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, to near 300 Souls, as I judge.---'Twas a Day never to be forgotten; but, I think, ought to be remembred with holy Wonder and Gratitude by all that were preſent. The Houſe of the Lord was full of the Glory of the Lord. It pierces me to the Heart, that any have ever attempted to throw Darkneſs over the rich Grace of God that was ſo clearly diſcover'd; or to miſrepreſent the gracious Effects of thoſe Diſcoveries that were made to many.---Tho' we had enjoy'd much of the gracious Preſence of God in our Aſſemblies before, yet, I think, never ſaw ſo much at any Time as on that Day; eſpecially when the Lord's-Supper was adminiſtred, GOD pour'd out his Spirit in a wonderful Meaſure. I ſpake a few Things to the Communicants, as I remember, concerning the mediatorial Excellencies and the Love of JESUS CHRIST, when I came down to the Communion Table and began to break the Bread; and then invited them all to come to him as well as to his Table; and aſſur'd them in his Name, that they ſhou'd be Welcome, to the rich Treaſures of his Grace which were open and free to all that wou'd come. I had no ſooner offer'd ſome Things of this Nature in a few ſhort Hints, but ſeveral of the Church cried out in moſt bitter Accents of their piercing the LORD JESUS CHRIST by their Unbelief, and ſhew'd the Signs of Diſtreſs in their Countenances; whilſt many Scores were diſſolving in Tears. A conſiderable Number trembled in the Anguiſh of their Souls, as tho' they had heard the Thunderings and ſeen the Lightnings from the thick Cloud; whilſt many more began to put on Immortality, almoſt, in the Look of their Faces. I could not but think that the Lord Jeſus was come to his Table, and feaſting their Souls with his Love, diſcovering his mediatorial Glories to them; letting them taſte of his Preciouſneſs, opening to them the myſterious Wonders of his Grace, and the like. But will you aſk *why* I entertain'd ſuch Thoughts as theſe? I'm willing you ſhould know the Reaſon: Their Looks were all Love, Adoration, Wonder, Delight, Admiration, Humility. In ſhort, it look'd to me a Reſemblance of Heaven; where the ſhining Hoſts of Angels and glorified Saints are for ever before the Throne of God, in the loweſt Proſtration crying Holy, holy, holy Lord God; *thou art worthy to receive Glory and Honour, and Power, and Bleſſing, and Thankſgiving.* But

ſome of thoſe in Diſtreſs, about the End of the Diſtribution of the Bread, appear'd to be in a Calm, and before the Cup was pour'd they ſeem'd to have a delightful Senſe of ſomething upon their Minds: Their Looks were changed from Anguiſh to Pleaſure and Admiration, Love and Humility, and the like. ---I was too much taken up with theſe Things, and ſome Diſcoveries, which I truſt, were made to me, with the Effects of them, to make any critical Remarks upon any Indecencies: Tho' ſome few not ſo well pleas'd with the Appearances, have ſaid that there was one or two Inſtances of theſe Extraordinaries that were not decent the whole of the Time of Adminiſtration. One Thing complain'd of as an Indecency was that *two* Men embraced each other in their Arms before the Bleſſing was given: The Fact, I ſuppoſe, is true; but others ſay 'twas after the Bleſſing was given: Nor do I think it ſo very indecent, as ſome would repreſent it. The *venerable* Dr. *Colman*, to whom I gave an Account of it, ſays in his Letter to me in theſe Words, 'I eſteem his, *viz.* the Dea-'con's embracing his Neighbour as Praiſe-worthy. I wou'd 'not have Joy and Love lead Communicants into too much '*ſenſitive* Freedoms towards one another; leaſt of all the Bre-'thren and Siſters. Each to thoſe of their own Sex may be 'allowed and approv'd a great Way, a due Gravity preſerv'd.' --- Another Thing complain'd of is Perſons going about the Meeting-Houſe in the Sacrament Time. This, I ſuppoſe, was true, that one ſingle Perſon who was a Subject of theſe Influences, did go out of one Pew into another upon ſome Occaſion juſt before the Bleſſing was given, and ſome two or three others that, it ſeems, did not ſo well affect the Proſpect went round the Body of Seats on one Side of the Houſe, and then out of Doors.---- Bleſſed be God that there was nothing further, than I have related, which has been excepted againſt as I remember. The general Reverence and Decency of Behaviour in the Subjects of this great Grace was indeed admirable. I greatly wonder (and deſire humbly to bleſs God for it) that there was ſo little in their Conduct which thoſe who ſee not with my Eyes, could lay hold of to expoſe the Glory of that Day. --- I made Minutes of my Remarks and Sentiments, in my Diary; and find that, upon the beſt Evidence I cou'd gain by converſing with particular Perſons afterwards, I had fallen far ſhort in my Obſervations at the Time, of what was really diſcover'd to many Souls, and the Power

of

of the Goſpel felt upon their Hearts.--- Many old Chriſtians told me they had never ſeen ſo much of the Glory of the Lord and the Riches of his Grace, nor felt ſo much of the Power of the Goſpel before: they had never ſeen ſo clearly the infinite Ocean of divine Love; never been ſo ſenſible of the Love of God to them; nor had ſuch ſtrong Love ſo *clearly* in Exerciſe to him. Several of them had the full Aſſurance of Faith, who had been ſeeking after it for many Years, but were denied till that Time. *New Converts* were greatly refreſh'd and quicken'd. --- I can't doubt whether they had the Preſence of the Comforter: Chriſt then appear'd more lovely than the Princes of this World: They *ſat under his Shadow with great Delight, and his Fruit was ſweet to their Taſte:* They were feaſted in his Banqueting-Houſe, and his Banner over them was Love: They could not ſupport themſelves, many of them, under the Weight of it, they were ſo deeply affected with it. Had not Chriſt put underneath his everlaſting Arms for their Support, I know not, but many would have expired under the Weight of divine Benefits.---And beſides all this, I think, we have a good Evidence of the ſaving Converſion of ſeveral of the Communicants at the ſame Time. The ſeveral Diſcoveries they gave an Account of, together with the Effects theſe Diſcoveries produced in a Law-Work, and a true Cloſure with Jeſus Chriſt, gave me conſiderable Hope of it; and a long Time ſince to obſerve their pious Life and holy Converſation, confirms my firſt Hope that it was a Reality and no Deception. --- I'm perſuaded the marvellous Grace of God appearing at that Seaſon, is admir'd by Hundreds among us here in Time, and will be much more admir'd by the Armies of Saints and Angels throughout Eternity. --- Chriſt came like a *Roe* or a *young Hart*; he look'd forth at the Window, and ſhew'd himſelf through the *Latteſs!* I never ſaw ſuch a Love-Feaſt before! He ſpake the Word and it was done; he ſaid, *Riſe up, my Love, my fair One, and come away:* and lo, the Winter was paſt, the Rain was over and gone: All invited us to come and partake of the divine Joys which the near Approach of the Sun of Righteouſneſs produce. O that he would *return like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of* BETHER! That he would make Haſte to perfect his Loving-kindneſs to us, and not ſuffer the Foxes to ſpoil the Vines which hang with tender Grapes!

Since

Since that Time, we have had many refreſhing Seaſons, both in public Worſhip and more private Aſſemblies; and many hopeful Converſions. Nor are publick and private Meetings the only Places of theſe Influences and Effects; the Cloſet, the Field, the Shop, and the *Kitchen*, are all Witneſſes to them. 'Twas no uncommon Thing for Chriſtians to be overcome in their *private* Retirements, as they have told me of the happy Seaſons; in Meditation at ſometimes, and Converſation at others, divine Truth has been ſet in a clear Light, and they have been made to know the Truth, of the Goſpel of the bleſſed God. But the Work has not appear'd, in a general Way, ſo powerful ſince, as it did the firſt eight or nine Months; indeed God gives Witneſs to the Truth of theſe Things, at Times, more or leſs, unto this Day; and will, I truſt, until the End.

The Work, as I obſerv'd, began chiefly among the Youth, and ſo it has been carried on chiefly among them: But it was not among them alone. They left their Sports, and grew ſick of their youthful Amuſements; the Diſeaſe (as ſome call'd it in Deriſion) did not ſtop here. Many of middle and old Age were alarm'd, and ſome of them, to Appearance, ſavingly converted. *Three* or *four* upwards of *fifty*, *two* near *ſeventy*, and one *ninety-three* Years old, I truſt, were turned from Darkneſs to Light, from the Power of Sin and Satan unto God. Several Perſons that were noted for Immorality, and ſome others that were not ſo openly mark'd out, were bro't to confeſs their ſinful Deeds, not by Conſtraint but of their own Accord, and are now joined in our Communion, and I hope, are Chriſtians indeed. And there are ſome few Inſtances of the Converſion of thoſe that bitterly oppos'd the Work at firſt: ſuch as have gone to hear Sermons, with Deſign, as they confeſs, to cavil and oppoſe, have been taken.---*One* or *two*, that ſuppoſed themſelves converted, greatly rejoic'd in the Work at firſt, when the People were under deep Convictions: the Concern they well underſtood, and tho't it reaſonable, and were pleas'd to ſee ſo much Reformation, they themſelves having gone ſo far; but when Perſons came to rejoice in God, and to be overcome with the Love of God, and to tell of the Excellencies of Chriſt, it was all Fooliſhneſs to them; they grew all Enmity and Oppoſition, but were, afterwards made to ſee that they ſettled down upon their Reformations; were Enemies to God

God themſelves and Strangers to Chriſt; and ſince then are bro't to rejoice in God alſo.--Some others who were under diſtreſſing Concern at firſt, and very forward to promote every Thing that ſeem'd a probable Means of Good, are ſince turn'd zealouſly averſe to the Work, eſpecially to the Comforts and Joys of Chriſtians.---It has been obſerv'd by many, that ſuch as were moſt eminent for Religion before, have been friendly and forward to encourage this Work; and they have been abundantly quicken'd and refreſhed. Several of them are ſince dead, and went off triumphing over the King of Terrors, in full Aſſurance of Hope.

Many that were greatly affected and concern'd for a while are grown eaſy and careleſs as formerly; tho' there is a Number unto this Day remaining under Convictions.---I don't remember any two Inſtances among us that ever gave me Satisfaction of their Converſion, but what ſtill manifeſt comfortable Signs of the Truth and Reality of it.--- 'Tis poſſible that ſome may think me fond of Numbers; and wonder at it the rather ſince I have met with ſo much Difficulty, and have had ſo many ill Reports ſpread abroad concerning the Doctrines, it has been ſaid that I have taught, as well as ſome other moſt abuſive Repreſentations of my Character. Yet, leaving ſuch Things to him who will ſhortly bring into open Light all the hidden Things of Darkneſs; I think I am call'd of God to ſay, that if we may give credit to the Accounts Perſons give of a clear Law-Work, and a Work of *effectual* Grace wrought upon their Hearts; after it it has been ſtrengthened by frequent repeated Accounts of their Communion with God, and a ſpiritual Converſation and good Life, in a general Courſe, for ſeveral Years together, I have Reaſon to hope about *one Hundred and eighty* Souls belonging to this Congregation, have met with a ſaving Change, ſince the Beginning of the late glorious Effuſion of the holy Spirit among us; beſides the frequent, and more than common Quicknings and Refreſhings of others that were, hopefully, in Chriſt Years before. And, perhaps, we have a confirming Teſtimony of the Truth of the Work, above what ſome others have had, in the viſible Meekneſs, Forbearance, Love, Forgiveneſs, and the like, with which they have generally behav'd themſelves in the Time of injurious Calumnies; when the Work of God, and their *perſonal* Conduct have been miſrepreſented. We have had Times of ſingular Trial and Tempta-

Temptation: what wou'd try every Vein in a Man's Heart.---But in all this Day of Difficulty, our *new Converts* as well as others, in general, that have fallen in with it, and experienc'd it, do generally come forth as Gold from the Furnace. I would ſpeak it to the Praiſe of free and rich Grace that has abounded to them; and hope they will ever carry it in their Minds that the Lord has been their Strength and their Shield, and their Helper in a Time of Trouble. Let it pleaſe God to make *all Grace abound to them, that they always having all Sufficiency in all Things, may abound in every good Work.* Let God increaſe the Fruits of Love, and Humility and Meekneſs; and enrich them in every Thing to all Righteouſneſs and Charity. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who has choſen them to be holy and without Blame before him in Love.* Let them wait ſtill for the Rain, and cry earneſtly for the latter Rain; that God wou'd give them enlarg'd Meaſures of Grace, and fill them with all ſpiritual Bleſſings.

But perhaps, *Rev. Sir*, you are ready to wonder, and ſay within yourſelf; what is all pure at *Lyme*? Has there been nothing from whence theſe formidable Accounts, we have had among us about that People, ſhou'd ariſe? What means the unhappy Repreſentations that have been given of us?

No doubt, *Sir*, there have been many Things amiſs: I tho't ſo from the Beginning, and I think ſo ſtill. The Spirit of God has been *grieved* by Queſtions and Strife about Words; by evil Surmiſings and perverſe Diſputings; by many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts. The Work of God's Grace has been *oppoſed by Perſons under Conviction* by their ſtanding out againſt the Calls given them to believe in the Name of him whom he has ſent, and *by Perſons* that have been *diſaffected* to this rich Grace.---Some were diſpoſed to cavil and fault the Work and all the Meaſures uſed for the carrying of it on from the Beginning. Some I thought a little *intemperate* in their Zeal at Times, and for ſome Things that it was hardly worth while to contend about.---I have ſeen Reaſon to alter my own Conduct in ſeveral Things. *Particularly*, to *treat* thoſe that oppoſed the Work with greater *Candour* and *Mildneſs*, and to *addreſs* myſelf to all Conditions of Men with more *Tenderneſs* than I did ſeveral Times.

(*To be continued.*)